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ABSTRACT

In order to ensure that man keeps step with the changes in the world it is necessary to continue the learning process throughout adulthood. Although many authorities see obsolescence as the only alternative to continuing education, some authorities and professions are beginning to speak of mandatory adult education. Since adult education is based on the precept of the adult learner as a volunteer, the basic philosophy of adult education is attacked when it becomes compulsory. Furthermore, regulation raises questions of who will regulate and what criteria will they use. Whether compulsory or not, however, there is a need for the revitalization of adult education, a process which will have to originate in the education profession. To this end the North Central Association's standards for adult high schools provide a step in the right direction. Now, when elementary and secondary school enrollments are dropping, it might be opportune to deflect some educational resources into adult continuing education rather than have the funds eliminated from educational budgets. Although the task of continuing education for adults may forever remain unfulfilled, all educators must do everything in their power to help adults meet their educational needs now and in the future. (JR)

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THE EVALUATION OF ADULT HIGH SCHOOLS: An Engine for School Improvement

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Beckwith in his book entitled The Next 500 Years estimated that by the year 2400, over one third of the world labor force will consist of professional workers (including executives), and on the average, each will spend 10 to 20 percent of his working life taking additional professional courses to avoid obsolescence.[1]

A new awareness is appearing in American educational thought: adults must continue to realize that learning, like breathing, is a requirement of living. The assumption that learning is a lifelong process is based on a new fact of life: the accelerating pace of social change and its effect on adults.

For the first time in the history of civilization, the time span of drastic cultural change and the acquisition of new knowledge has been telescoped within the lifetime of an individual. The current generation of mature adults represents the first generation faced with managing a culture different, in kind, from the one originally transmitted to them. Furthermore, more knowledge has been discovered during their lifetime than existed at their time of birth. The increased knowledge is also reflected in technological changes; these require adults to continuously adapt to new work methods, and often, even to new vocations. The consequence of these modern facts of life is such that the well-educated youth of today is an obsolete adult tomorrow.

Obsolescence endangers us in yet other ways. Increased mobility requires adults to learn new patterns, values, and identities. Such traditional havens as homes, churches, schools and businesses are, themselves,

[1]Beckwith, Burnham Putnam. The Next 500 Years. (New York: Exposition Press, 1967).

in constant flux as they strive toward a greater compatibility with modern living conditions.

The consequence of this rapid turn in the tide is clear: a society that invests, educationally, almost entirely on youth is reducing its chances for survival. Therefore, there is new emphasis on the education of adults. Illustrative of this is the shift of adult education from marginal to major concern for many legislators and policy makers. It is necessary to continue the learning process throughout adulthood in order to insure that man keeps step with the changes in the world.

While it is difficult for the adult to keep pace with his society, the pressure is greater, yet, for the person wishing to enter the mainstream. These individuals are those who have been overlooked or cast aside; they are faced with distinct barriers which hinder their ability to function sstisfactorily.

For the large number of persons entering the United State., a different language may be that which ostracizes them from acceptance; they remain visitors within the country. For others, an interrupted primary or secondary education may seriously restrict their contributions within the society. Without the high school diploma or opportunity for adult-continuing education, the ceiling is lowered in regards to opportunity for achievements. These individuals are likely to remain on the lower steps of the ladder of success and not contribute to our democratic society. This is tragic since our democratic system is founded on the basic education of all its people. Not only must citizens be educated in the processes of voting and of judging political issues with some objectivity, but fundamental literacy is also required for any normal adult functioning in our society:

> A random national sample of adults conducted recently by the Harris pollsters indicated that a minimum of twelve to thirteen million adults were unable to complete the most basic and frequently used forms (social security, driver's license, employment applications, etc.). These individuals not only were unfamiliar with the forms, but also lacked basic decoding skills, ability to follow directions, and minimal writing skills.
> In essence, findings from studies such as the above reflect a serious educational and social dilemma. Millions of adults lack basic communicative, computational, and social living skills necessary for the fulfillment of their responsibilities as parents, citizens, workers, and consumers.[2]

What does this mean to Adult-Continuing Education? Can we continue to operate like the self-made man and be all things to all people? (overlay 1) (see figure 1)

McCluskey and others have proven that adults can learn and that many items of importance peak during their life span, such as mental, physical and social ability. (overlay 2) (see figure 2)

The issues to which I am currently directing attention are the widely discussed ones relating to accreditation which often requires mandatory adult-continuing education. (overlay 3) - Wheel of Adult Education. (see figure 3)

Most research has supported the premise that decisions are usually made on a basis of emotion rather than reason. The most difficult decision regarding mandatory Adult-Continuing Education should not be made in a charged air of polarities.

From Malcom Knowles we hear echoing, society cannot continue with adults becoming obsolete. . . It has no choice.[3] Ralph Tyler, another

[2]Robert C. Mason, An Unfilled Task: Continuing Education for Adults. The North Central Association Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 2, Fall 1973.

[3]Roger DeCrow, ed., "Growing Time: Selected Papers from the Michigan State Leadership Seminars". 1964.

leader in education insists that in a learning society some men will be forced to learn.[4] And according to Cyril Houle, there are laggards in every profession. The only way their proficiency can be improved is by mandatory forms of reoccurring education.[5] (overlay 4) - Jessen

Great lists of well known authorities can be collected who see the only alternative to coninuing education as obsolescence.

When we speak of mandatory adult education, we are not referring to something which may happen in the year 2000. The snowball has already started on its trip downhill. The moment of decision may be whether to let it continue its course, picking up whom and what it may, or whether to attempt to regulate its descent in an orderly fashion.

At least twelve states require evidence of continuing education in annual recertification of osteopathic physicians. Since 1967 five or more states have adopted mandatory continuing education statutes affecting more than 22% of the pharmacists in the U.S.

The Oregon Medical Association has been the first to make continued training a condition of membership. . . as a result of this requirement, 17 members have recently resigned or been expelled, losing various benefits, though not the right to practice. A New Mexico law in effect will jeopardize even that, requiring doctors to average 40 hours of education annually or lose their licenses.

Optometry is the leader with 21 states having some form of relicensing requirements. Six state medical associations now have policies which in

[4]Ralph Tyler, As quoted from interview selections by Robert Blakely, Syracuse University.

[5]Cyril Houle, Lecture, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois. February, 1975.

effect mandate continuing education as a condition of membership. Three states give the State Board of Medical Examiners authority to require evidence of continuing medical education to re-register to continue practice.

Continuing education in the health service fields is not restricted to just medicine and its societies. The interdependency and the interrelated interests of the many professions serving the public in this are rapidly expanding. Ohliger indicated that the mandatory adult education net covers the health professions more than any other area. He was somewhat surprised to see it move in that direction first. He thought it would smother the poor and unemployed before it swept over the healers.

In the nursing profession, dentistry, and psychiatry, the question of mandatory requirements for continuing education is meeting mixed response. From questionnaires which were circulated, we learn that most feel that the organizations should be responsible for the education. Many feel compelled to plan for the instigation of some appraisal. Their contention is that if "we don't" the politicians will. Also the Internal Revenue Service allows tax deductions for required education.

How Do We Regulate or Impose?

If compulsory education truly is out of control or even if there are those who would wish to control it--where does it end? Who are the professionals? Is every one with a Bachelors Degree a professional something or other, or are we just referring to the Masters or Doctorate level? Is everyone with a certificate or license to practice a professional? Is it possible that compulsory adult education could in time work its way down the ladder of occupations to become a way of life? Houle would say that the

definition of a professional is however you want to define it.[6] Others would say it must have a code of ethics and a body of knowledge.

John Ohliger, one of the major opponents of mandatory education, in his article Adult Education: 1984 satirizes the mandatory education theme by tracing the child born in that year through a lifetime of education and re-education.

When he dies, a minister eulogizes him over his grave. By the way, the minister has gone through a "higher school" every two years for refresher courses in order to keep his license to preach. The minister delivers a beautiful eulogy. He points out that this man was very lucky, for he was born in 1984, the first year that the national "Permanent School Law" was in effect. "And so we bid goodbye to this lucky man," the minister chants, "firm in the conviction that he will go to heaven where he will attend a "school for angels" into infinity.[7]

Allen Tough in his book entitled The Adult Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning declares that out of 100 learning projects (which includes home repairs, raising children, and gardening) only 19 are planned by the professional educators versus 81 by the amateur learner. If each one in the audience were to construct a list of learning projects (a major learning effort of 7 hours or more) you would probably fit in with Tough's and other adult educators research which has been performed in ten or twelve different states.

Research by Tough and others on adults' learning projects have found the most common motivation for learning to be some anticipated use or ap-

[6]Cyril Houle, Lecture, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois February, 1975.

[7]John Ohliger, Adult Leadership. January, 1971, pp. 223-224.

plication of the knowledge and skill and the least to be possessing knowledge for its own sake.[8]

Is there a problem of professional competency? The present growth of relicensing practices would lead one to assume there is. Is it then the problem of the educators, the professionals themselves, or a problem in which all society will make the decision? Paul Legrand contends that one cannot rule out selection: industrial and commercial firms or administrative enterprises, for example, are not prepared to recruit staff on trust but demand certificates and diplomas usually from an accredited institution.[9]

The question at this point is then, if there is a problem of competency who should regulate or impose education on the professional? Will this demand for competency lead to even greater degrees of specialization?

The stories of small towns and isolated areas and their need for general medical practitioners are known to all of us.

Can you envision the reaction of a hill country father who after driving twenty miles to the nearest phone, calls the doctor to come quickly. He informs the answering service that his wife is in labor, and gets the answer that the doctor has gone to the city to take a couple courses and won't be back until tomorrow? Can society always wait until the professional 'tones up'?

As more and more states formulate their own licensing procedures, will professionals find themselves more and more limited by intra-state boundaries? Will the consulting engineer serving on a fee-for-service basis discover that he must obtain credentials in state after state?

[8]Allen Tough, The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory & Practice in Adult Learning. Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

[9]Paul Legrand, "Perspectives in Lifelong Education", Newsletter National Council of Adult Education, New Zealand, Vol. 5, No. 7, March 1970, pp. 16-27.

If mandatory education becomes a way of life, who then regulates or imposes the regulatory procedures?

What Criteria Will Be Chosen for Judgment?

Self education, reading of professional journals, attending voluntary seminars, and professional meetings has long been the role of the professional and his claim to continuing education. Is this sufficient? All of us have known the professional who signed in at his professional meeting and then headed for the nearest golf course. Time is the professional's greatest enemy. Does he have time or, more important, does he take time to read the latest research in his field? Many professionals favor mandatory Adult-Continuing Education for income tax deduction purposes. Is self-motivation sufficient insurance against obsolescense?

If regulations are to be imposed for recertification, what basis will be used for evaluation? How are we to know that the professional now knows more than he did? How is society to know that he not only knows more but has increased his judgment in being able to apply that which he now 'knows'?

Some recommend a test criteria. The psychiatric association suggests the self-test as the most useful way of improving professional competence. The most commonly used and perhaps the easiest to administer is the proof of course work in the particular area. The self administered test holds some promise. The college of medical surgeons require a certain minimum score on a self administered test and design their professional journal on the basis of the weaknesses revealed by the self tests.

In current systems of higher education, satisfactory course work as a method of evaluation has become standard. Yet from G.E. Miller in Convergence we see revealed that several studies indicate continuing education has little

influence on subsequent practice.[10]

Another important issue in our society, involves those who refuse to complement the professional education they have received with proof of additional knowledge and improved competence. Or one might question what should happen to the professional who somewhere along the way fails to meet the 'standard' or is termed the laggard.

Those who oppose the concept of compulsory continuing education for the practitioner paint the rather humorous picture of the forty-five year old professional being chased down the road by the truant officer.

Albert Quie counters this thesis when he explains that if some of our children thought they would Never escape the classroom, we would have a genuine revolt on our hands. But no one is talking about sentencing individuals to a lifetime in the classroom. Rather we are talking about the need for many adults to 'step in' and 'step out' of structured learning experiences throughout their lives.[11]

Our youth culture has given many of us food for thought in the last few years but perhaps one of its most useful concepts has been that of the educationl 'stop out' as opposed to a societal drop out. Will professionals in the future, in ever increasing numbers, be considering 'stop out' education not only a need but a requirement?

As Cyril Houle has pointed out, in a recent lecture at NIU, some comparative studies might deal not with processes but with problems common to

[10]G.E. Miller, Convergence. Vol. 3, No. 4, 1970.

[11]Albert H. Quie, "The Challenge of Lifelong Learning", Adult Leadership. Vol. 21, No. 6, Dec. 1972, pp. 182-184.

most or all of the professions. . . How much good does compulsory learning do? Does it really ever help either the practitioner or his clients? If so, what are the best ways to use it and how can it be most skillfully applied?

A sociologist once stated that just as you can not mandate society's attitudes, neither can you assure its competence. Are we at that point in time when survival requires that we assure its competence, and if so what are the processes which insure the product? (Example - waste water treatment)

What criteria shall be used to evaluate? Hutchins states that it seems most unusual for some educators to advocate 'school for everyone all the time', whereas others are renouncing the value of schools for education at all.[12]

What shall be learned? How shall it be learned? How shall we know it has been learned? Houle favors assessment of all learning experiences.

A commercial I heard on the radio the other night, seemed very analagous to this situation. The announcer stated that you do not have to improve the cut of the meat as long as you make the gravy look expensive. How can we insure that compulsory continuing education will improve the grade of the meat and not just add a little more salt and pepper to the sauce?

Who Will Deliver the Education Package?

If renewal courses of study become the professional road to acceptance who will then become more professional than the professionals?

This may in itself become a great incentive to professional schools to deliver the most complete and comprehensive package of knowledge that man has ever known.

Thomas J. Sork and Mary Pankowski in the January 1975 issue of

[12]Hutchins, Robert M. The Prospects for a Learning Society, Santa Barbara, California: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1971. Audiotape #548.

Adult Leadership outline the possible nucleous of a plan using the Continuing Education Unit as a measurement for continued certification of practitioners. It would be a university's means of maintaining "warranty work" and would be based on the simple rationale that William Miller mentions in his article "Recalled for Revision" (Phi Delta Kappan, December, 1971). Students should be 'recalled' by their school for two reasons:

1. They have been released with defective parts
2. Some of the equipment which was in the past classified as optional has been reclassified as standard.

Each diploma might include an allotment of Continuing Education Units to give the graduate some assurance that his alma mater will continue to be concerned about him long after he completes his formal degree program.

Which is the Better Incentive?

In a recent seminar Cyril Houle used the example of getting the donkey moving: which is better, the carrot or the stick? The carrot might represent increased status, more degrees, an increase in income, acceptance in the more elite societies. The stick is of course represented by laws, license and certification renewal. It is not enough just to get him moving up the trail but once moving to get him to continue to do so.

Adult Continuing Education As A Profession - -

The basic philosophy underlying all of adult continuing education is being attacked when adult education becomes compulsory since it is based on the precept of the adult learner as a volunteer. Can adult educators accept this changing concept and will they have a choice? Is this a prime example of the tail wagging the dog?

At the invitation of the U.S. Commissioner of Education, A.A. Liverright

was awarded the opportunity in the 1960's to look at adult education programs in American society. He concluded in a long and classic report the statement: To the extent that the freedom to learn is comprised, crippled, or constrained, all other freedoms are eroded or lost.[13]

The level of education is being linked with the problems of personal, national, and social existence, as well as with the progress of the whole community. It seemed, at the beginning, that the acquiring of professional status was a goal in itself. Now, it is clear that this is only a point in the professional development of a person, so that it becomes the first phase in the development of a profession.

In support of professional development, the following remarks refer to North Central Association accreditation for Adult High Schools:

The task force which developed the guidelines operated with this philosophy. If adult education is to be vitalized, the impetus will have to come from those within the profession. Fortunately, the time seems ripe for a renewed emphasis on wider educational opportunities for adults. Essential to this development will be guidelines and standards established by the profession to help direct and stimulate adult education programs.

It is hoped that the newly adopted NCA standards for adult high schools will serve this function within the nineteen states served by the NCA.[14]

The standards seek to establish those conditions that must undergird any effective adult high school program. They are framed so as to permit a wide range of autonomous action, experimentation, flexibility, and vigor on the part of the individual adult high school. These standards should help

[13]Liverright, A.A. A Study of Adult Education in the United States, Center for Liberal Education of Adults, Boston University.

[14]North Central Association Commission on Secondary Schools, Policies and Standards for the Approval of Separately-Administered Adult High Schools, 1973-1974 (Chicago, 1973).

adult high schools to move forward to their rightful place in the councils of secondary education.

North Central Association membership is not mandatory but voluntary, and only those adult high schools that perceive values in regional accreditation will apply for it. To be eligible, the school must issue or plan to issue a high school diploma, though other aspects of adult education such as leisure time and co-curricular activities are also covered by the standards. The major intent of the standards is to promote the development of separately-administered adult high schools wherever circumstances so dictate.

The standards recognize that adults bring many unique and valuable life experiences with them into the classroom. Hence provisions are made for the granting of credit towards the diploma for accomplishments such as prior correspondence work, work training, and pertinent military experience. While still keeping the high school diploma distinct from the GED certificate, partial and specific credit may be given for certain qualifying scores on that battery of tests. Credit also may be given on the basis of other examinations that cover the work normally taken in a high school course.

In an effort to upgrade teacher preparation for adult education, the standards require that within three years of initial employment, adult high school teachers in the diploma completion program shall have completed satisfactorily six semester hours of course work in the field of adult education. Credit towards meeting this requirement may be allowed for institutes, workshops, and seminars in adult education conducted by teacher training institutions. A similar requirement for some training in adult education is levied upon directors and principals.

It is understood that these standards, which were designed by adult educators, are not to remain fixed and immobile. Rather they are to be adapted to changing needs and circumstances as the relationships between

our schools and our society alter. In consequence, provisions are included for amending the standards at any annual business meeting of the Commission.

It is a truism that the more people use their schools, the more likely they are to support those schools. This, of course, is one of the major spin-offs of a vigorous program of adult continuing education within a community. And at this point when the predicted drop in elementary and secondary school enrollments is upon us, it might be possible to deflect some of the resources of the district into adult continuing education rather than having the funds eliminated from the budget.

Perhaps in the final analysis the task of continuing education for adults will always remain an unfulfilled one, for there will always be adults who seek to learn more. But adult educators--all educators--must do whatever is in their power to help adults meet their educational needs now and in the future.

Summary----

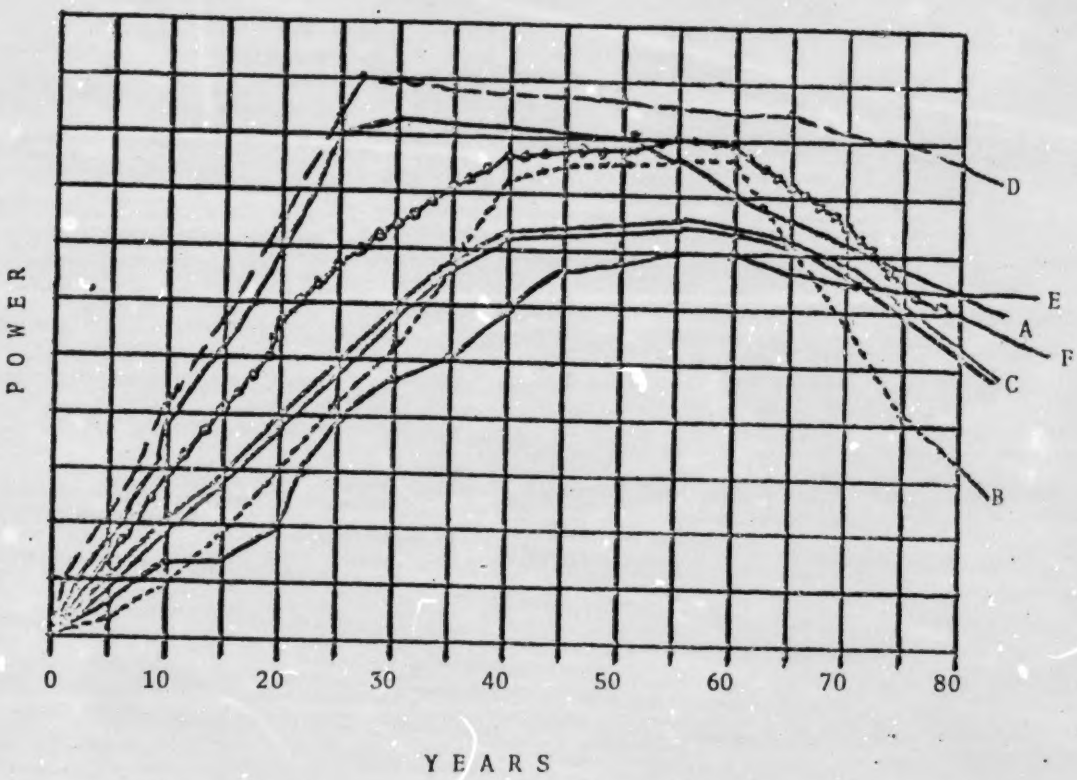
The intent of this presentation has not been to attempt to give you the answers as to whether we should or should not have mandatory continuing education for the professional adult. My purpose has been to present as many of the questions as possible in the hopes that the decisions made, in which many of you will play a part, will be resolved in the light of as much reason and rationality as possible, rather than based on the emotion encountered when such terms as freedom, obsolescence, and humanity are introduced.

To capsulate the issues then it is primarily a question of: Should there be mandatory adult continuing education? If so, how should it be regulated and imposed and on whose responsibility? What criteria would be most effective for insuring competence and what incentives should be used?

The questions are far easier than the answers.

Some are no doubt already in favor of compulsory education for the professional, some have unquestionably taken sides against. The majority are no doubt fence sitting like the proverbial 'mugwamp' waiting for the bulk of the evidence to accumulate.

LIFE SPAN CURVES



A. Physical (Peak: 25 to 30)

B. Production Occupation (Peak: 40 to 60)

C. Social Competence (Peak: 40 to 60)

D. Mental Ability (ability to learn) (Peak: 25 to 30)

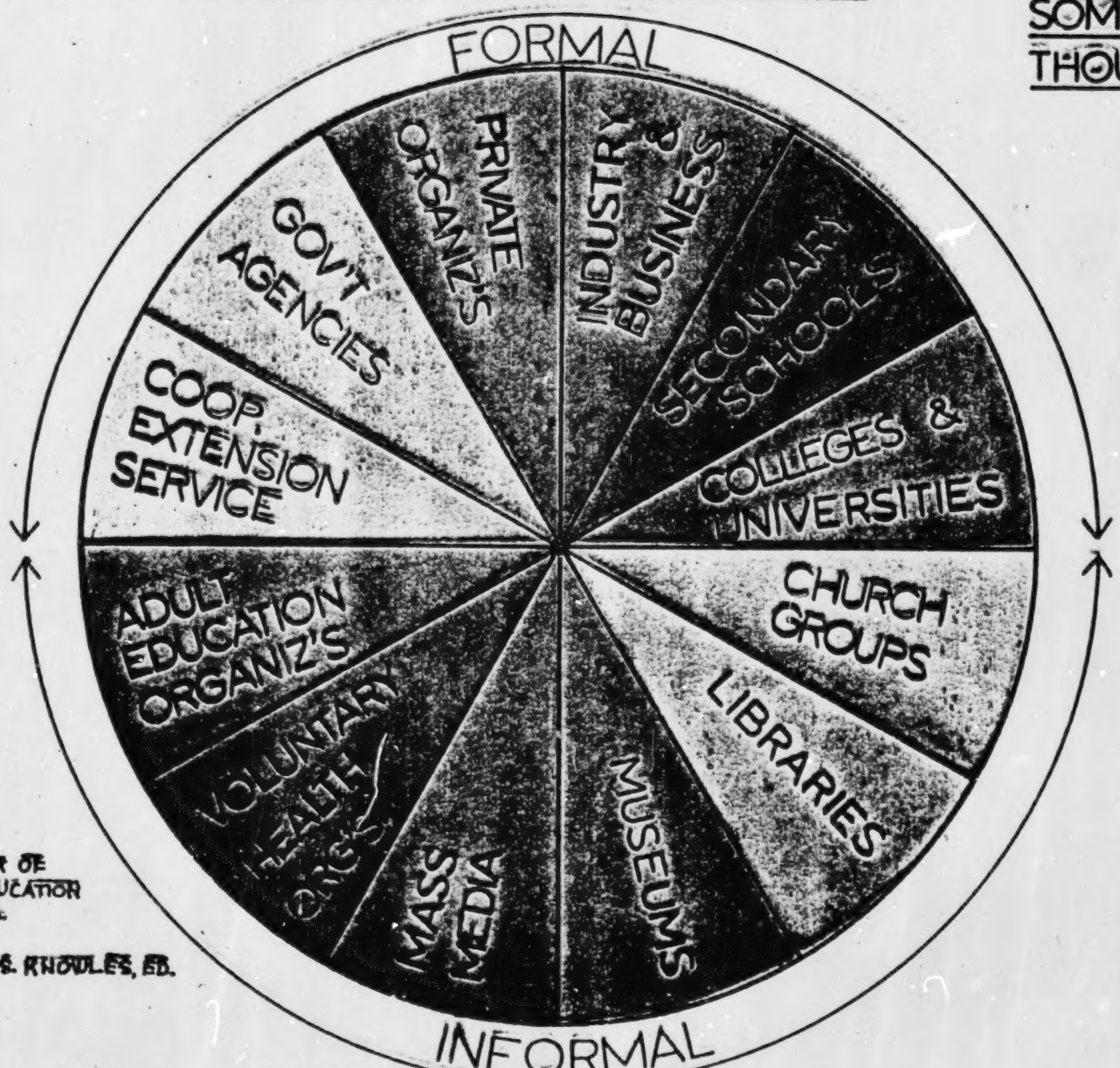
E. Self Satisfaction (Peak 50 to 60)

F. Global

Source: Presented by Dr. McClusky, University of Michigan, at Chautauqua by the Pacific, June 20-28, 1973.

WHO IS AN ADULT EDUCATOR*

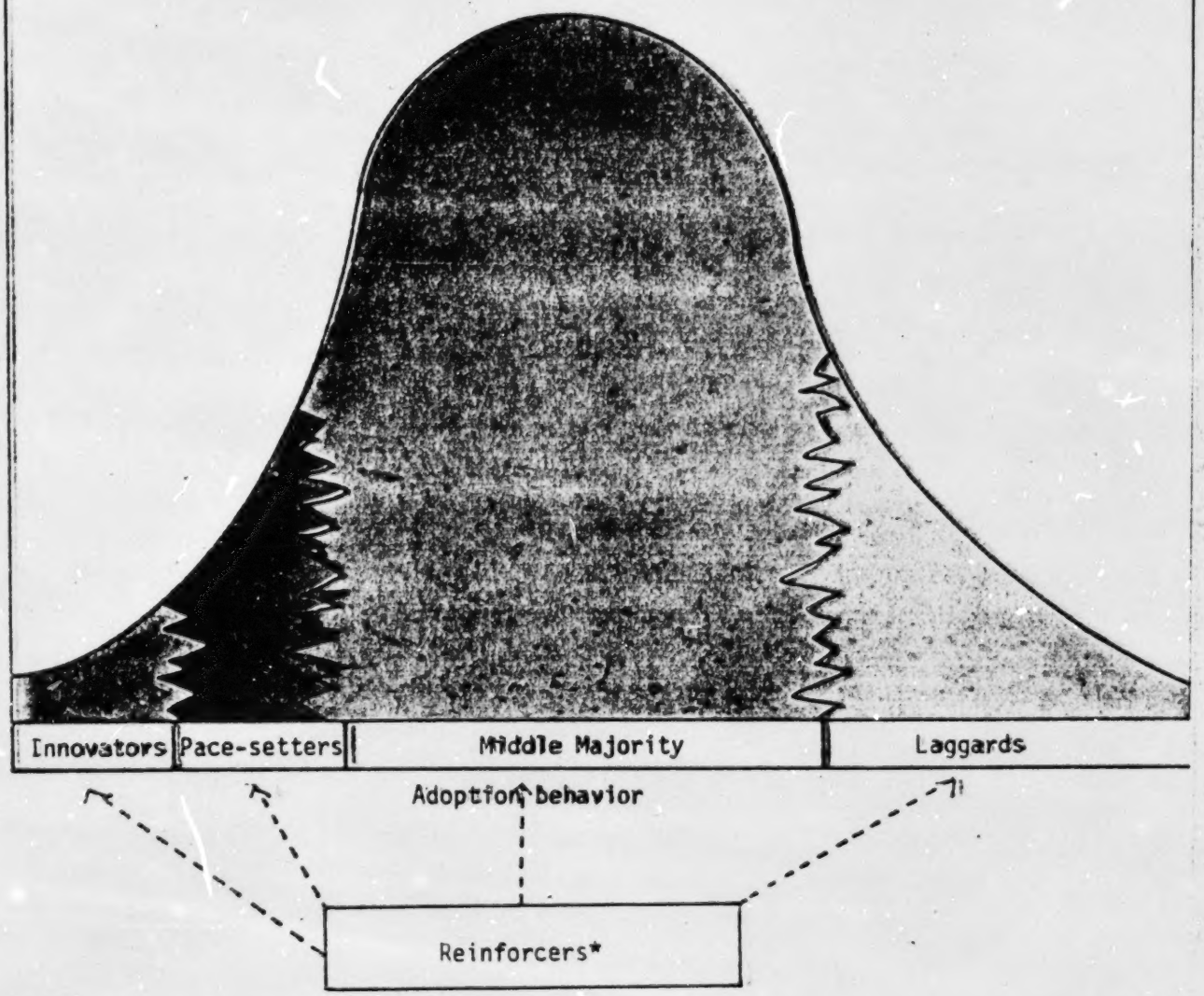
SOME THOUGHTS



* HANDBOOK OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

MALCOLM S. KNOWLES, ED. 1960 ed.

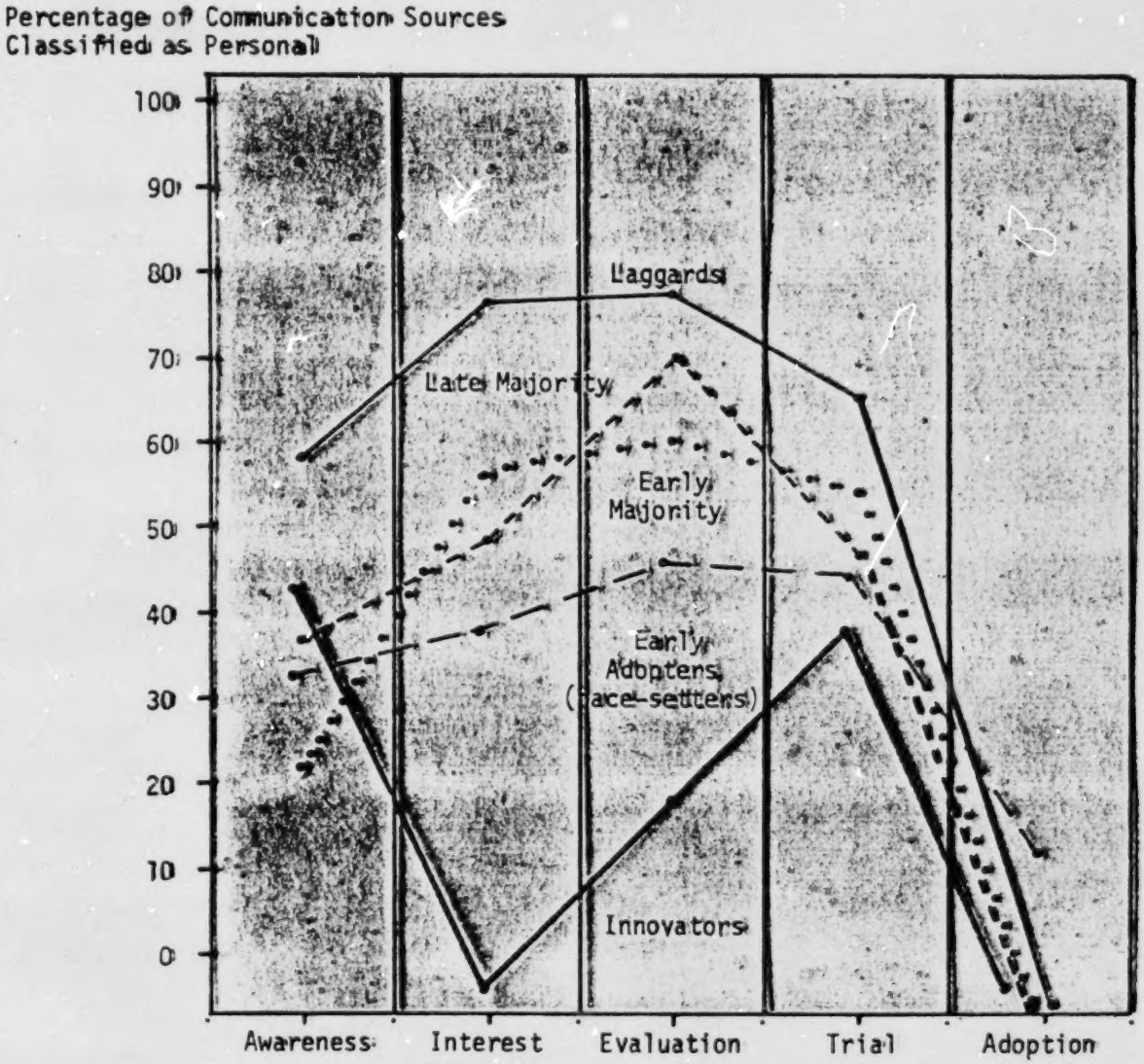
A CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF A PROFESSION IN TERMS OF ADOPTION OF INNOVATIONS



*Professors, association executives, researchers, stimulators, editors, government regulators, etc.

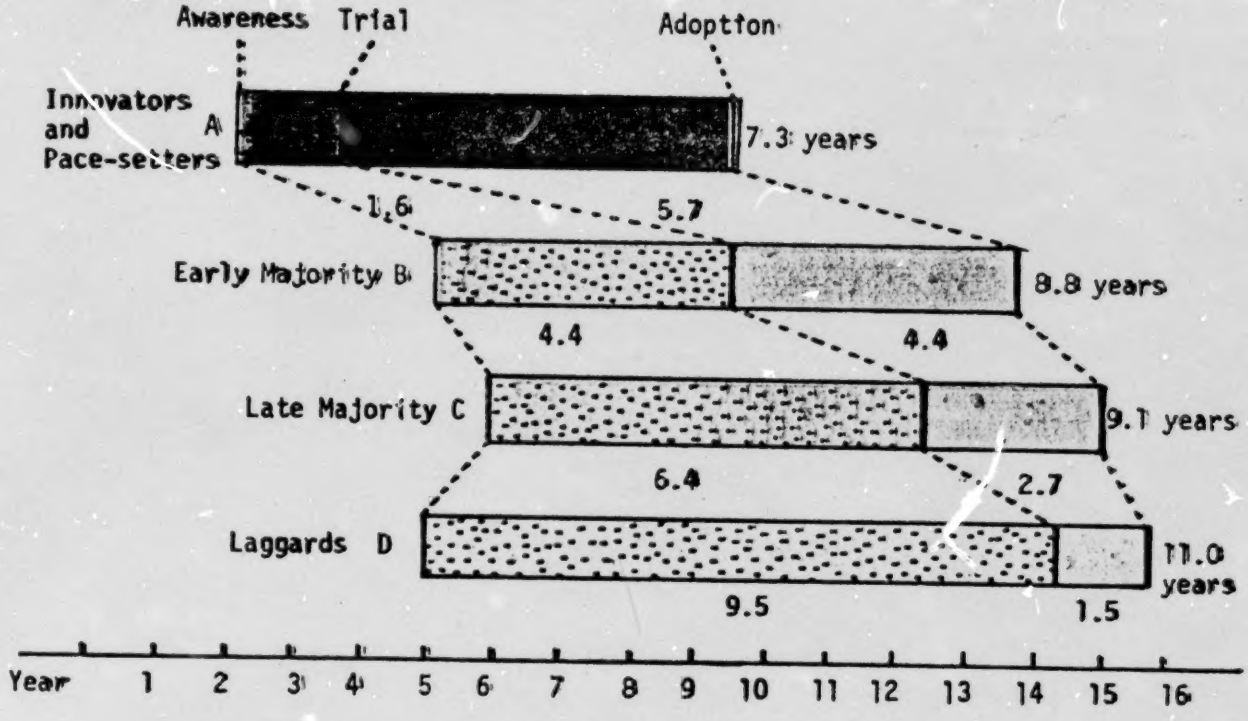
(Adapted from Houle, Rogers, Lionberger, et. al.)

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION SOURCES AT EACH STAGE IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS



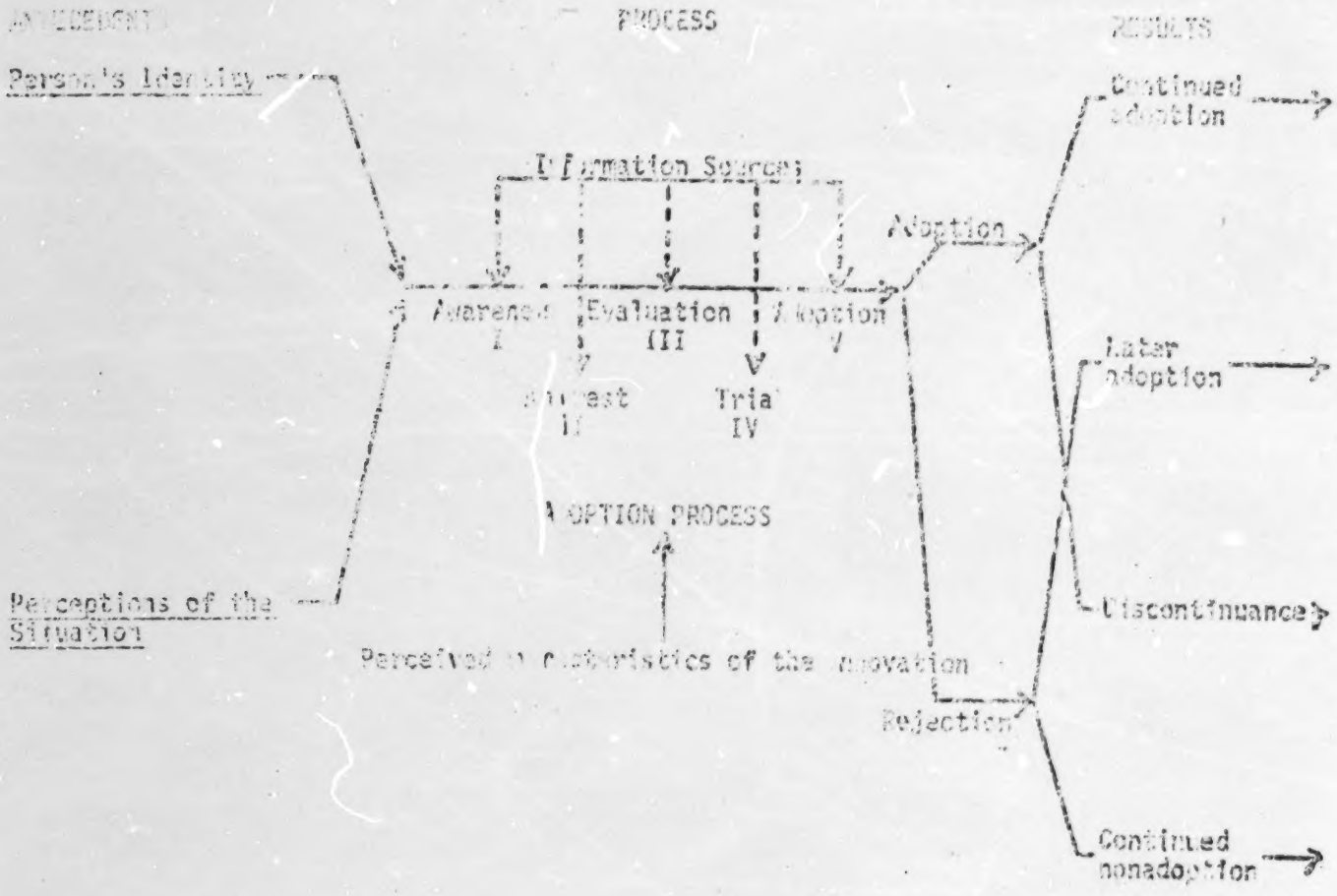
(From Rogers' 2,4-D Weed Spray study)

LENGTH OF THE AWARENESS-TO-TRIAL AND THE TRIAL-TO-ADOPTION PERIOD OF ONE INNOVATION



Adapted from Gross' study for hybrid seed corn
(from Rogers, Diffusion of Innovation, p. 144)

THE ADOPTION PROCESS IN TOTAL CONTEXT



(Adapted from Rogers, Diffusion of Innovation, p. 101)